Thinking With the Church: Essays in Historical Theology
B.A. Gerrish

Reviewed by Jim West

The last installment of Gerrish's collected essays concerns the Eucharist and chapter 11 is *The Reformation and the Eucharist*. Unsurprisingly Gerrish describes the Eucharistic controversy which characterized the 16th century and the contributions to that controversy by Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and the Catholics (at Trent) as well as the far less important Cranmer. Gerrish is fair and even handed and isn't drawn to 'take sides' in the issue, instead, he's simply willing to let the combatants rend each other.

Especially delightful is his summary of Zwingli's thoughts on the Eucharist and Calvin's. 'Calvin was not Greatly concerned to explain *how* Christ is present in the Supper, any more than Luther had been. He writes "I rather experience it than understand it… In his Sacred Supper he bids me take, eat, and drink his body and blood under the symbols of bread and wine. I do not doubt that he himself truly presents them, and that I receive them." He was prepared to marvel at what he could not comprehend' (p. 245-6).

The final chapter of the book is titled *The Grace of Christ*. 'The entire history of theology in the Western … tradition is so dominated by the concept of grace that one could reasonably tell it as the story of theological reflection on grace and the means of grace' (p. 261). So Gerrish outlines that history focusing on Augustine, Thomas and Luther.

Gerrish's book is just simply fantastic. I commend it to anyone who wants to think with the Church.